Draft Test Specifications for Writing

Tri-State New England Partner States

New Hampshire

Rhode Island

Vermont

Writing Assessment Overview

The Tri-State New England (TSNE) Large-Scale Writing Assessment will be designed to provide individual student performance data, information useful to teachers in planning instruction, and school-wide data on the effectiveness of the school/district writing program. This assessment will be administered in the fall, and only at grades 5 and 8. The assessment will consist of all common items - multiple-choice items, constructed response items, and a longer extended writing prompt. The assessment will yield an overall writing score translated into a Performance Level, based on standard setting and establishment of cut scores. *In addition, bidders are asked to suggest methods for reporting additional information derived from the scoring of the extended writing piece (such as information about the strengths/weaknesses of the application of writing conventions within the piece of writing).*

The writing assessment will be a power test - administered during two testing sessions of approximately 45-minutes each; students will be given additional time to complete each part of the test, if time is needed. Due to the importance of assessing students' ability to apply their writing skills within the context of a complete writing piece, a longer extended writing prompt will be included. Shorter items - multiple choice and constructed response items – will provide the opportunity to assess concepts and skills across a variety of writing genres identified in the TSNE Grade Level Expectations. Multiple-choice items will include such things as editing tasks and identifying text structures in writing (e.g., use of appropriate transition words or identification of organizational structures). The bulk of testing time in writing will be delegated to extended writing and constructed response items. The extended writing prompt will be double scored and will also be used to collect additional information relating to writing dimensions and writing conventions. Maximum number of score points for the writing assessment is approximately 37 points.

Two testing sessions for writing are described as follows. One session will consist of a combination of approximately ten (10) multiple choice and three (3) constructed response items. Constructed response items included in this testing session will sample writing genres not assessed through the extended writing prompt. These constructed response items will be "shorter" pieces of writing (e.g., writing a single-paragraph when given a topic sentence). The second testing session will include approximately five (5) multiple-choice items followed by an extended writing prompt. Whenever possible, these shorter multiple-choice items in part 1 of the test session will provide some context or "preparation" for the extended writing prompt to follow. For example, a multiple choice item might present sample notes or facts on a topic and ask students to organize notes or select relevant facts and details to support a given main idea. Part 2 of this testing session might ask students to then write the multi-paragraph report on that given topic. Item interdependence, however, should be avoided. Success on items in part 1 should never predetermine successful completion of the extended writing item. *Bidders are asked to address the proposed writing test design, with recommendations for genres to be sampled for the extended writing prompt, considering genres proposed by the TSNE states.*

Introduction

Draft TSNE Writing Test Specifications

These draft TSNE Writing Test Specifications were developed based upon preliminary discussions with partner state assessment directors, the GLE development team for writing, and advice from Center for Assessment staff. Test Specifications will be reviewed by the ELA (reading and writing) content teams and modified consistent with the groups' recommendations. Revisions are subject to review by constituents of each of the partner states. These test specifications are scheduled for completion by January 2004.

Alignment Considerations

The TSNE writing grade-level assessments are to be aligned with the TSNE test specification GLEs. Alignment will consider:

- The specific writing content knowledge and/or skills identified in each TSNE writing GLE;
- The implied Depth of Knowledge (based on Webb) and the "ceiling" identified in each TSNE writing GLE;
- The selection of appropriate text - literary or informational - using authentic texts for items related to Writing in Response to Text (See also Appendix A, of supporting document, Draft TSNE Reading GLEs, for a description of suggested texts at each grade level, and Appendix C of TSNE Reading GLE document for descriptions of Text Complexity for different grade spans); and
- The Distribution of Emphasis identified across writing content clusters/genres as described in the Balance of Representation Study for Writing.

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The Draft TSNE Writing Test Specifications are organized into the following sections:

Test Specification Sections	Focus of Section	Pages
I. Design Features of TSNE GLEs	TSNE Writing GLE Content Clusters TSNE GLE Format and Development Sample Items to Illustrate GLE Features	5-9
II. Reporting Categories and Prioritization Strategies	Reporting Categories for Writing Prioritization Depth of Knowledge Levels (DOK) Writing DOK "Ceilings" for GLEs Distribution of Emphasis What is meant by the content of writing?	9-15
III. Item Types and Scoring Guides	Item Types: Multiple Choice, Constructed Response, Extended Writing Scoring Guides for Item Types Sample Items with GLE Alignment and DOK levels	16-30
IV. Administration Guidelines	Testing Times, Accommodations, Classroom Materials	31
V. Overview of Test Design	Overview of Test Design Two 45-minute testing sessions, with additional time provided	32-33
VI. Summary of Test Components, Rationales, and Bidder Flexibility	Review of Rationales for each Test Component with Related Bidder Requirements and Flexibility	34-35
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I. Design Features of TSNE Writing GLEs
Criteria for the Development of TSNE GLEs are found in Appendix A. Potential bidders should carefully review the criteria.

A. Writing Content Clusters
TSNE Writing GLEs are organized into nine GLEs across <u>five content clusters</u>: Structures of Language (W1) and Writing Conventions (W9) may be assessed in isolation or across any of the other writing clusters. Three types of writing included for assessment in TSNE writing GLEs are: Writing in Response to Literary or Informational Text (W2, W3), Narratives (W4, W5), and Informational Writing (W6, W7, W8).

TSNE Writing Assessments will be administered in the fall of grades 5 and 8 only, drawing upon the writing GLEs from the previous grades (grade 4 and grade 7). The following Table 1.1 indicates the number of GLEs for each grade by writing content cluster.

Table 1.1: Number of TSNE Writing GLEs by Writing Content Cluster and by Grade (Draft November 2003). Only TSNE GLEs at the end of grades 4 and 7 will be assessed through large-scale assessment.

Writing Content Clusters	Number of Writing GLEs *by the end of* Grade…					
	3	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**
W1: Structures of Language	1	1	1	1	1	1
W2, W3: Writing in Response to Literary or Informational Text	2	2	2	2	2	2
W4, W5: Narratives	2	2	2	2	2	2
W6, W7, and W8: Informational Writing (Reports, Procedures, Persuasive Writing)	3	3	3	3	3	3
W9: Writing Conventions	1	1	1	1	1	1
Total TSNE GLEs by Grade	**9**	**9**	**9**	**9**	**9**	**9**

B. Format of TSNE GLEs
The set of GLEs within and across a grade span and within a content cluster have specific features that developers need to address to assure alignment to TSNE writing GLEs. The features include: (1) the "stem;" (2) specifics related to the stem; (3) differences identified between adjacent grade levels; (4) the intended meaning of the use of the conjunctions "and" and "or;" and (5) the intended use of EXAMPLES with some GLEs.

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1. GLE Stems
Each TSNE writing GLE contains a ***bolded*** statement – the stem – at the beginning of the GLE. These statements identify the big ideas related to the content cluster that the TSNE partner states have identified for inclusion in the large-scale state assessments. These statements are designed to help "focus" the state assessment without narrowing local curriculum and instruction supporting student learning related to the GLE. The set of GLE "stems" within a content cluster provide a guide to maintain coherence in curriculum, instruction, and assessment. Stems are the same across all grade levels. Notice that the stems are the same for grades 4 and 7 in the example in Table 1.2.

2. Specifics Related to the GLE Stem
Each unbolded portion of the GLE, in conjunction with the stem, identifies the specific content/skills and implied cognitive demand at a given grade level. Each GLE is coded for the content area (writing), the GLE "stem" number, the specific indicator for that GLE stem, and the grade level. (For instance, "W6.2.4" means W (Writing) – 6 (6th GLE "stem") – 2 (the second specific indicator for that stem) – 4 (grade 4). These "bullets" are coded only for ease of use and do not imply a hierarchy of skills or knowledge related to the GLE. Notice that while the stems are the same for grades 4 and 7 in the example in Table 1.2, the descriptions in bullets (W2.1, W2.2) below the stems are different to reflect developmental and/or instructional differences at those specific grades.

3. Differences Identified Between Adjacent Grades
Differences between adjacent grades are underlined to indicate ***new content or skills*** not yet introduced at prior grade levels for large-scale assessment. (NOTE: The TSNE GLEs in writing include GLEs for all grades 3-8, to provide continuity across grades, even though only two grade levels will be assessed through large-scale assessments.) In the example in Table 1.2 below, students at grade 4 and at grade 7 are both expected to select information to the set context for writing. Students at grade 7 are expected to select and summarize key ideas to set the context, while grade 4 students are expected only to select appropriate information to set the context for their response to text.

Table 1.2 Format of TSNE GLEs
Grades 4 and 7 Draft NE GLE W2: Response to Literary or Informational Text

Grade 4 (Beginning Grade 5)	Grade 7 (Beginning Grade 8)
NEGLE #W2: In response to literary or informational text, students show understanding of plot /ideas/concepts by…	**NEGLE #W2; In response to literary or informational text, students show understanding of plot /ideas/concepts by…**
• W2.1.4 Selecting appropriate information to set context/background • W2.2.4 Connecting what has been read (plot/ideas/concepts) to prior knowledge, which might include other texts	• W2.1.7 Selecting and summarizing key ideas to set context • W2.2.7 Connecting what has been read (plot/ideas/concepts) to prior knowledge, other texts, or the broader world of ideas

4. Use of Conjunctions – "and" and "or" – within GLEs

It is recognized that all aspects of TSNE Writing GLEs cannot be sampled every year for assessment. The use of specific conjunctions in the TSNE writing GLEs are clarified for assessment development with the following intended meanings.

➢ "And" means that *to the extent possible,* elements within a GLE connected by "and" should be included in the assessment every year.
➢ "Or" means that items assessing those aspects of the GLEs can vary from year to year; any or all aspects are possible for inclusion.
➢ Additionally, in some cases, "or" is used when students have choices, such as how they will cite supporting evidence for their responses. These choices would be noted in scoring guides for items, when appropriate.

5. The use of EXAMPLES with some writing GLEs

In some cases, examples are included at the end of a GLE statement. "EXAMPLE" is in all capital letters to set it apart from the GLE statement. The examples are not part of the GLE, but serve to illustrate sample test questions, to provide greater specificity to a general GLE statement (e.g., organizational structures, figurative language, etc.), or to further clarify the intent of the GLE in some way. In some cases, the examples will be underlined to indicate that a new example is now "fair game" for assessment at this grade level. Examples are of a smaller grain size than the GLE statement and should not narrow the overall assessment or test item; however, examples will provide guidance in item development. (See sample items on next page, Table 1.3.)

C. Sample items to illustrate GLE Features

To illustrate the intent and meaning of the GLEs and to exemplify some of the features of the item design considered to be most important – when "and," "or," or "EXAMPLES" are used – sample items and explanations are provided in Table 1.3.

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Table 1.3 Illustrations of Some GLE Features (and, or, EXAMPLES)		
NEGLE	**Key feature to be assessed**	**Sample item/explanation**
Example 1.A Interpreting the use of "and" and "or" in TSNE Writing GLEs		
W2.1.7 In response to literary or informational text, students show understanding of plot /ideas/concepts by… Selecting and summarizing key ideas to set context"	The intent: Students will (1) select AND (2) summarize key ideas to set context for their response to text. NOTE: In a single MC item, students would be able to select key ideas OR select an appropriate summary of key information, but would not demonstrate the ability to select AND summarize key ideas to set the context for a response.	(CR) In this article, the author tells about how to train a pet. Which dog-training ideas presented would be most important in changing your own pet's behavior? As you write, be sure to: *summarize key ideas presented;* explain expected changes in pet behavior; and include support for your reasoning. Source: Adapted from PSSA Practice test, Released items, grade 5
Example 1.B Interpreting the use of "and" and "or" in TSNE Writing GLEs		
W2.2.7 In response to literary or informational text, students show understanding of plot /ideas/concepts by… Connecting what has been read (plot/ideas/concepts) to prior knowledge, other texts, or the broader world of ideas"	The intent: Students will (1) make connections to plot/ideas/concepts citing (2) either prior knowledge, OR other texts, OR the broader world of ideas OR a combination. The way in which connections are cited may be based on students' choices and the content of the text passage provided for the response. In the example, *"your own ideas"* could include prior knowledge, the broader world of ideas," or some combination.	(CR) Use the information in this passage to help explain whether your family could provide a good home for the bear. As you write, be sure to: explain whether your family could provide a home for a bear; use the author's information to explain your reasoning; and include your own ideas. Source: PSSA Practice test, Released items, grade 8
Example 1.C – Intent of use of EXAMPLES in TSNE Writing GLE wording		
W1.3.7 Students demonstrate command of the structure of sentences, paragraphs, and text by…identifying organizational structures *within* paragraphs or *within* texts EXAMPLES: description, chronology, proposition/support, compare/contrast, problem/solution	Intent: Identify organizational structure used within text passages. EXAMPLES provide a list of the types of organizational structures that are "fair game" for assessment at grade 7, including: description, chronology, proposition/support, compare/contrast, problem/solution	(MC) The title and headings in this article are provided to organize the information for the reader. The author has organized information to show… a. time order of events. b. problems and solutions. c. how things are alike or different. d. arguments in support of a proposed idea.
Example 1.D – Intent of use of EXAMPLES, "when applying rules…" in TSNE GLE wording		
W9.2.4 In independent writing, students demonstrate command of appropriate English conventions by…applying basic capitalization rules EXAMPLES: names, proper	Intent: Correct use of capitalization, in addition to capitalization at the beginning of sentences. Since proper nouns and titles are	Two item types are possible: 1. (MC) Selecting correct capitalization use (proper nouns, titles); 2. (MC or CR) Editing a draft piece

| nouns, titles | (underlined) new to grade 4 writing expectations, these applications should be the focus of items that target correct use – selecting a correct response from ones provided or rewriting a sentence or passage correctly. (See examples of items #1 and #2.)

Capitalization is only one aspect of English conventions. Extended prompts will not be scored specifically for applying conventions, and therefore are not the best item type to use to assess W9.2.4. | of writing to make corrections related to capitalization (beginning of sentences, names, proper nouns, or titles);

NOTE: Extended Writing Prompts – Using correct capitalization (beginning of sentences, names, proper nouns, titles, etc.) when drafting a piece of writing in response to a prompt, will only be included in "additional information" related to strengths and weaknesses of the piece. |

II. Proposed Reporting Categories and Prioritization for Writing

A. Proposed Reporting Categories

There will be two reporting categories for the TSNE Writing Assessment. *Bidders are asked to propose a strategy for providing additional feedback related to applications of writing conventions and writing dimensions (purpose, organization, elaboration, voice/tone).*

1. Overall Writing Score: The overall writing score will be based on all common items/score points.

2. Performance Level: The overall writing score will translate into a Performance Level, based on standard setting and establishment of cut scores. There will be four Performance Levels, as described in the introduction to TSNE Test Specifications for all content areas.

3. Additional Information (not part of the overall writing score):

Additional information about the effective application of writing conventions and writing dimensions will not contribute score points, but will provide valuable feedback to teachers that will inform classroom instruction and school writing curriculums. *Bidders are asked to propose strategies for providing feedback on the extended writing item (and possibly the constructed response items) related to…*

- Writing Dimensions: Purpose, Organization, Details/Elaboration, and Voice/Tone
- Writing Conventions: Grammar, Usage, Mechanics

B. Prioritization

The TSNE Writing GLE content development team employed several strategies to help prioritize the specifics identified within and across content clusters and GLEs for large-scale assessment. This work has included a Balance of Representation Study to determine the Distribution of Emphasis *by writing genre* for the TSNE writing assessment and identification of "ceilings" for Depth of Knowledge Levels for the TSNE writing GLEs.

Questions to guide prioritization for large-scale assessment in writing (Hess 2003)

1) Is the genre, concept, or skill part of a big idea in the discipline? (E.g., is "Writing in Response to Literary or Informational Text" a big idea of writing?)
2) Is the success on the concept or skill at a given grade essential for success in writing in subsequent grades?
3) Should the genre, concept, or skill be assessed at an earlier grade because success at that earlier grade is important for success at the given grade?
4) Is the concept or skill developmentally appropriate to be assessed at this grade?
5) Should the genre, concept, or skill be assessed at a later grade for state assessment purposes? (E.g., should persuasive writing only be assessed at grade 8, for example?)
6) Are genres, concepts, or skills important for success in other disciplines in given grades or subsequent grades (e.g., informational writing in content areas, for example)?
7) Would the concept, or skill be more appropriately assessed at the classroom level (e.g., writing process)?

C. Depth of Knowledge (DOK) Levels for Writing

The TSNE Writing Assessment will assess Depth of Knowledge Levels 1, 2, and 3 only. Depth of Knowledge at Level 4 should be reserved for local assessment, and is included herein only for illustration purposes. A general definition for each of the four Depth of Knowledge levels is followed by Table 2.1, which provides further specification and examples for each of the levels.

Descriptors of Levels for Writing (based on Webb and Wixon, March 2002)

Level 1 requires the student to write or recite simple facts. This writing or recitation does not include complex synthesis or analysis, but basic ideas.
Level 2 requires some mental processing, such as beginning to connect ideas using a simple organizational structure. At this level, students are engaged in first draft writing for a limited number of purposes and audiences. Students are beginning to connect ideas using a simple organizational structure.
Level 3 requires some higher level mental processing. Students are developing multi-paragraph compositions that may include complex sentence structures or demonstrate some synthesis and analysis.
Level 4 Higher-level thinking is central to this level. Multi-paragraph compositions demonstrate synthesis and analysis of complex ideas or themes and evidence of a deep awareness of purpose and audience.

Table 2.1 – Detailed Descriptions of Depth of Knowledge Levels for Writing
(Adapted by K. Hess, Center for Assessment/NCIEA, 2003, Based on Webb)

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Some examples that represent, but do not constitute all Level 1 writing performances:	**Some examples that represent, but do not constitute all Level 2 writing performances:**	**Some examples that represent, but do not constitute all Level 3 writing performances:**	**Some examples that represent, but do not constitute all Level 4 writing performances:**
• Listing/generating ideas or words prior to developing written composition (e.g., brainstorming, webbing) • Selecting or recalling appropriate vocabulary (words, phrases, idioms) to achieve intended meaning in writing • Writing simple sentences • Using punctuation marks and capitalization correctly in writing and editing • Using Standard English conventions in writing and editing to correct errors • Identifying misspelled words in a written passage • Applying conventional spelling patterns/rules to new situations in writing • Using resources (dictionary, thesaurus) to correct spelling in written passages • Using resources to identify Standard English grammatical structures for correction	• Note-taking or outlining as a means of organizing ideas for writing • Developing text which <u>may be</u> limited to one paragraph • Using simple organizational strategies to structure written work (e.g., basic paragraph form: indenting, main idea, supporting details; simple transitions) • Constructing a variety of sentence types (e.g., simple and compound, sentences with embedded phrases) • Writing summaries that contain the main idea of a reading selection and pertinent details • Demonstrating basic understanding and appropriate use of such reference materials as a dictionary, thesaurus, or web site • Editing final drafts of compositions for mechanics and conventions, including grammar, punctuation, and capitalization	• Developing compositions that include multiple paragraphs • Using complex or varied sentence structures in written compositions • Demonstrating some synthesis and analysis in writing (making inferences; determining relationships; generalizing, or connecting ideas) • Showing awareness of audience and purpose through focus, organization, voice/tone • Using appropriate organizational text structures (e.g., description; chronology; proposition/support; compare/contrast; cause/effect) • Editing and revising to improve the quality of the composition • Supporting ideas with details, examples, quotations, text references, and/or citations • Editing final drafts to produce a logical progression of ideas • Summarizing information from multiple sources to address a specific topic	• Developing multi-paragraph compositions that demonstrate synthesis and analysis of complex ideas or themes • Analyzing author's craft (e.g., style, bias, literary techniques, point of view) • Demonstrating evidence of a deep awareness of purpose and intended audience. (e.g., in informational reports including hypotheses and supporting evidence) • Creating compositions that demonstrate a distinct voice and that stimulate the reader or listener to consider new perspectives on the addressed ideas or themes • Writing an analysis of two selections, identifying the common theme and generating a purpose that is appropriate for both • Gathering, analyzing, and evaluating written information for the purpose of drafting a reasoned report that supports and appropriately illustrates inferences and conclusions drawn

Depth of Knowledge as a "Ceiling" NOT as a "Target"
An important aspect of the grade level assessment design is to use the highest Depth of Knowledge (DOK) demand implicit in a GLE as the "ceiling" for assessment, not the "target." Table 2.2 provides three examples of TSNE writing GLEs with different "ceilings," that is, the highest Depth of Knowledge Level at which a GLE should be assessed. When considering the highest Depth of Knowledge Level as the ceiling not the target, the GLE has the potential to be assessed at Depth of Knowledge Levels at the ceiling, and up to the ceiling, depending upon the demand of the GLE. Table 2.2 also indicates the other DOK levels at which the GLE could be assessed.

Table 2.2   Examples of GLEs and Depth of Knowledge for Assessment Purposes

Examples of *end of* Fourth Grade Writing GLEs	**Ceiling**	**Potential DOK Levels for Assessment**
NE GLE #W9 In independent writing, students demonstrate command of appropriate English conventions by… • W9 1.4 Identifying grammatical errors, when given examples (EXAMPLES: he don't; Him and me went) • W9 4.4 Using end punctuation correctly in a variety of sentence structures • W9 2.4 Applying basic capitalization rules (EXAMPLES: names, proper nouns, titles)	1	1 (Applying basic rules; correcting errors)
NE GLE #W1 Students demonstrate command of the structures of sentences, paragraphs, and text by… • W1 1.4 Writing a variety of complete simple and compound sentences • W1 2.4 Using the paragraph form: indenting, main idea, supporting details	2	1 (Writing simple sentences) 2 (Writing compound sentences; Using a simple organizational structure)
NE GLE # W3 In response to literary or informational text, students make and support analytical judgments about text by… • W3 1.4 Stating and maintaining a focus (purpose) when responding to a given question • W3 2.4 Making inferences about content, events, characters, setting, or common themes • W3 3.4 Using specific details and references to text to support focus • W3.4.4 Organizing ideas, using transition words/phrases and writing a conclusion	3	1 (Selecting details to support a *given* focus) 2 (Organizing ideas; selecting details to support focus) 3 (Making inferences; determining relationships, generalizing)

Why is this distinction between "ceiling" and "target" important?
If assessed only at the "target," all GLEs with a Level 3 as their highest demand would only be assessed at Level 3. This would potentially have two negative impacts on the assessment: 1) The assessment as a whole would be too difficult; and 2) important information about student learning along the achievement continuum would be lost.

Distributions of Depth of Knowledge Levels for TSNE Writing GLEs
In order to avoid these potential negative effects, a Balance of Representation Study, informed by Depth of Knowledge levels of GLEs across content clusters and genres in writing was conducted. It is recommended that TSNE GLEs with a DOK Level of 3 should be assessed at least at a Level 2, and, when possible, at a Level 1 as well. To the extent possible and practicable, item development for multiple choice items and constructed response items will be guided by these DOK ceiling levels. Table 2.3 identifies the Preliminary DOK levels for TSNE writing GLEs.

Table 2.3: *Intended* Writing Depth of Knowledge Ceilings for TSNE Writing GLEs – Assessed at the Beginning of Grades 5 and 8

DOK Ceiling Levels for TSNE Writing GLEs						
TSNE Writing Content Clusters	**Drawing from TSNE Writing GLEs at Prior Grade Levels For Grades…**					
	3	**4**	**4/ Begin 5**	**6**	**7**	**7/ Begin 8**
W1 Structures of Language			2			3
W2 Response to Text			3			3
W3 Response to Text			3			3
W4 Narrative			3			3
W5 Narrative			2			3
W6 Informational			3			3
W7 Informational			2			3
W8 Informational			2			3
W9 Conventions			1			1

D. Distribution of Emphasis for Writing Assessment Items

To determine recommendations for Distribution of Emphasis across writing content clusters, the TSNE writing team identified clusters or writing genres for greater or lesser emphasis, using item types as a guide – multiple choice, long constructed response, or extended writing items. ***Generally, those areas selected for greater emphasis should be assessed with extended writing or constructed response items,*** with perhaps supporting multiple-choice items. Those areas identified with less emphasis should be assessed with multiple choice or constructed response items.

Table 2.4: Draft TSNE Writing Distribution of Emphasis for Large-Scale Assessment (December 2003 – to be finalized after review of field test data)

NE GLE by Content Cluster	2/ Beginning 3	3/ Beginning 4	4/ Beginning 5	5/ Beginning 6	6/ Beginning 7	7/ Beginning 8
	Balance of Representation by TSNE Writing Content Cluster					
1 Structures			Less emphasis			Less emphasis
2,3 Response to text			Greater emphasis			Greater emphasis
4,5 Narrative			Greater emphasis			Less emphasis
6, 7, 8 Informational Writing			Greater emphasis (Reports)			Greater emphasis (Reports or Persuasive)
9 Conventions			Less emphasis			Less emphasis

E. What is meant by the Content of the Writing? (Hess 2003)

While writing is considered a "process," both the process of applying writing skills and writing content knowledge should be considered when designing this writing assessment. Several aspects are considered when defining the content of writing. For the purpose of this assessment, the content of writing includes:

- Understanding concepts of writing dimensions and writing conventions and the conditions under which they may be applied, such as within different writing genres
- Ability to apply skills related to dimensions and conventions of writing
- Ability to sustain application of writing dimensions, such as maintaining a focus and supporting focus with references to text, in an extended writing piece

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The TSNE GLEs below are used to exemplify this development of writing content. (Note that in this table, the underlining in beginning of grade 8 represents any new writing content that is assessed after beginning of grade 5.)

Table 2.5

End of Grade 4/Beginning Grade 5	End of Grade 7/Beginning Grade 8
NE GLE W3: **In response to literary or informational text, students make and support analytical judgments about text by…** • W3.1.4 Stating and _maintaining_ a focus _(purpose)_ when responding to a given question • W3.2.4 Making inferences about content, events, characters, setting, or_ common themes_ • W3.3.4 _Using specific details _and references to text to support focus • W3.4.4 organizing ideas, using transition words/_phrases _and _writing a conclusion_	**NE GLE W3:** **In response to literary or informational text, students make and support analytical judgments about text by…** • W3.1.7 Stating and maintaining a focus (purpose), _a firm judgment, or point of view _when responding to a given question • W3.2.7 Making inferences about _the relationship(s) among_ content, events, characters, setting, theme or _author's craft_ • W3.3.7 Using specific details, references to text, or _relevant citations to support focus or judgment_ • W3.4.7 Organizing ideas using transition words/phrases and _writing a conclusion that provides closure_

The level of expectation in this sample TSNE writing GLE increases across the grades in content knowledge while maintaining the same Depth of Knowledge demand. At both grades 5 and 8, the ceiling for this GLE is a Level 3. However, the content knowledge extends from demonstrating understanding of focus, organization, support from text, and appropriate voice to a more sophisticated approach to integrating elements of text, sustaining focus, using relevant citations, making inferences about author's craft, and demonstrating awareness of one's audience through voice, text structure, and details.

Test specifications for the TSNE Writing Assessment include sample items with brief descriptions.

Each sample item included in the final test specifications for writing is accompanied by the following information:

- Grade Level
- Item Type
- TSNE GLE alignment
- Supporting explanation of design related to writing skills and concepts assessed
- Depth of Knowledge Level (for sample item)

> **Grade Level: 5ᵗʰ Grade**
>
> **Item Type: Multiple Choice, Constructed Response, or Extended Writing**
>
> **Alignment to NE GLE:**
> **NE GLE # X – GLE stated with stem in bold.**
>
> **Supporting information about the design related to writing skills and concepts assessed**
>
> **Depth of Knowledge:** Level ---: Appropriate descriptors from table in Section II that match the sample item.

III. Item Types and Scoring Guides for Writing

The TSNE Writing Assessment will consist of three item types: multiple choice (MC), long constructed response (CR), and one longer extended writing (EW) response. One of the two testing sessions will include one extended writing item, requiring approximately 25-30 minutes to complete. Additional time will be given to students, if needed to complete items in either of the testing sessions.

The assessment will yield approximately 37 total score points: 15 points coming from the multiple choice items, 12 score points from the constructed response items, and 10 points from the extended writing item. A 5-point holistic scoring rubric will be used for the extended writing item and double scored to yield 10 total possible score points. Table 3.1 describes each item type for the writing assessment.

Table 3.1 – Item Types for Writing Assessment

Item Type	Description	Purpose
Multiple Choice items (MC)	The multiple-choice items will consist of four alternative answers. While distracters will be plausible and reflect common errors, they must be unambiguously wrong in the judgment of experts. Each item will be worth one score point.	The multiple-choice items will be used to assess understanding of specific concepts and skills related to the use of writing conventions and writing dimensions. These items will typically assess student performance at Levels 1 and 2 of Depth of Knowledge.
Constructed Response items (CR)	Constructed response items will include items requiring editing tasks, sentence or paragraph writing/revising, organizing ideas for writing (such as selecting details or outlining), as well as items requiring a brief analysis or explanation of reasoning. Constructed response items will be worth four points. Each item will be assessed using a task-specific analytical rubric.	The purpose of these items is to demand that students create, explain, or analyze shorter text passages. These items will assess student performance at Levels 1, 2, or 3 of Depth of Knowledge. CR items will sample genres *not* assessed with the extended writing prompt.
Extended Writing Response items (EW)	Extended writing response items will be constructed so as to give students the opportunity to develop a coherent writing piece, applying their skills and understanding of writing dimensions (purpose, organization, details, voice/tone) and conventions for a given purpose. These items will be scored holistically using genre-specific rubrics. Extended writing will be double scored to yield 10 possible points and some additional information about applications of conventions and writing dimensions.	The purpose of these items is to assess the students' ability to apply a variety of writing skills in *developing a first draft* of a longer piece of writing. These items will assess Levels 2, 3 of the Depths of Knowledge. These items reflect the higher cognitive demand of planning and creating a piece of writing.

A. Sample Items Types

Three sample assessment item types related to the same TSNE Writing GLE are included below, with DOK Levels identified. (Draft item samples were developed by Vermont Institute Writing team, 2003.)

NEGLE #W3: In response to literary or informational text, students make and support analytical judgments about text by…

- W3.1.4 Stating and maintaining a focus (purpose) when responding to a given question
- W3 2.4 Making inferences about content, events, characters, setting, or common themes
- W3.3.4 Using specific details and references to text to support focus
- W3 4.4 Organizing ideas, using transition words/phrases and writing a conclusion

Example 3.A – Multiple Choice Item

You have just read a passage from the book *Mr. Dillis Goes Home*. The focus of this story is: **Mr. Dillis is silly**. Which sentence below is the best supporting statement for this focus*?*

    a. Mr. Dillis cried when he saw his son.
    b. Mr. Dillis was so happy when he saw his son, he stood on his head and sang "Don't worry; be happy."
    c. Mr. Dillis did not say anything, but stood there frowning.
    d. Mr. Dillis smiled at his son.

Grade Level: 5th Grade

Item Type: Multiple Choice

Alignment to NE GLE:
NE GLE # W3 3.4 Using specific details and references to text to support focus

Supporting information about the design related to writing: Students are given a focus (Mr. Dillis is silly.) and asked to select a reference from text that best supports the given focus.

Depth of Knowledge: Level 2: Selecting pertinent details from the text
.

Example 3.B – Constructed Response

You have just read a passage from the book *Mr. Dillis Goes Home*. You will be writing a response to literature, using the focus: **Mr. Dillis is silly**.
Find three references to text that support this focus, **Mr. Dillis is silly.** Write your text references in the boxes below.

Mr. Dillis is silly when…	Mr. Dillis is silly when…	Mr. Dillis is silly when…

Grade Level: 5th Grade

Item Type: Constructed Response

Alignment to NE GLE:
NE GLE # W3 3.4 Using specific details and references to text to support focus

Supporting information about the design related to writing: Students are given a focus (Mr. Dillis is silly.) and asked to select and write three references from text that support the given focus.

Depth of Knowledge: Level 2: Selecting pertinent details from the text

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Example 3.C – Extended Writing Response

You have just read a passage from the book *Mr. Dillis Goes Home*. In the story, Mr. Dillis often acts very silly. Write a response to text supporting that judgment about Mr. Dillis. Be sure to include references to text and explain why the evidence you selected supports your judgment.

Grade Level: 5th Grade

Item Type: Extended Writing

Alignment to NE GLE:
NE GLE # W3.1.4 Stating and maintaining a focus (purpose) when responding to a given question
NE GLE# W3 3.4 Using specific details and references to text to support focus
NE GLE# W3 4.4 Organizing ideas, using transition words/phrases and writing a conclusion

Supporting information about the design related to writing: Students are given a reference to a focus (Mr. Dillis often acts very silly.) and asked to state a focus and organize ideas, by selecting and explaining references from text that support the focus.

Depth of Knowledge: Level 3: Organizing ideas, selecting evidence from the text, and explaining how text references support the focus.

B. Writing Scoring Guides

The TSNE Writing Assessment is designed to provide school-wide data on writing curriculum and instruction and on individual student performance according to the Grade Level Expectations related to each state's curriculum framework of standard*s*. Because the assessment includes a variety of item types and reporting categories, several types of scoring guides will be employed. The chart below summarizes the scoring guides to be utilized.

Table 3.2 – Scoring Guides for Writing

Item Type	Scoring Guide	Score Yield
Multiple Choice	Answer Key	0 or 1 point
Constructed Response	Task-Specific Rubrics	0, 1, 2, 3, or 4 points
Extended Writing Response	Genre-Specific Rubrics for holistic scoring* (* See Appendix C)	0, 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 weighted points (double scored)

There will be approximately 37 possible score points. All points will be combined to yield the student raw score. Writing in Response to Text, if used for the extended writing prompt, will be a common item, but may matrix both literary and information text passages, scored using a common, 5-point, holistic scoring rubric. Scoring guides should address the "first draft" nature of writing prompts.

Sample answer keys or task-specific rubrics accompany examples of MC and CR writing items on the following pages. Genre-specific holistic scoring rubrics are included in Appendix C. Holistic rubrics include: Informational- Reports (grades 5 and 8); Narrative (grade 5); Informational – Persuasive (grade 8); and Response to Literary or Informational Text (grades 5 and 8).

Anchor responses for all writing items will be selected from field-testing to further illustrate the scoring rubric descriptors. *It is expected that the contractor will work with the TSNE writing content committee to review and refine writing prompts in all genres of writing to be field-tested and to assist with selection of anchor papers illustrating all score points.*

C. Examples of Items with Answer Keys/Scoring Guides

Example 3.D – Multiple Choice: **Grade 5**
Question: Which sentence below contains a mistake/error?
    a. Mother and I went shopping yesterday.
    b. She don't like ice cream.
    c. My dog has run away.
    d. My brother went to the store with me.

Answer Key for Correct Response: b (grammatical error)

Grade Level: 5ᵗʰ grade

Item Type: Multiple Choice

Alignment to GLE:
GLE #W9 .1.4 In independent writing, students demonstrate command of appropriate English conventions by … identifying grammatical errors when given examples.

Supporting information about the design related to writing: Students identify the sentence with an error, but do not correct it or explain why it is incorrect.

Depth of Knowledge: Level 1: Identifying Standard English usage and recognizing errors.

Rationale: The student needs to choose an incorrectly written sentence from among four short simple sentences. The sentences are not related to each other, so the student looks at each one separately as a single discrete item. The subject/verb agreement in this sentence is incorrect. Each of the other choices has correct standard usage and is a basic, correctly written simple sentence.

Example 3.E – Multiple Choice: Grade 8
Read this passage and then answer the questions that follow.

      It was the final minute of the basketball game, and our team was loosing by one point. I passed the ball to my friend Rita, who made a fast break to the basket. Dribbling furiously around the guard. She attempted a shot from the three-point line. The ball wobbled around the rim, and then it sank through the net just as the buzzer sounded.
      "Rita!" I shouted. "I hero!"

Question 3.E.1: What is the correct way to fix the error in lines 1-2?
a. It was the final minute of the basketball game and our team was loosing by one point.
b. It was the final minuet of the basketball game, and our team was loosing by one point.
c. It was the final minute of the basketball game, and are team was loosing by one point.
d. It was the final minute of the basketball game, and our team was losing by one point.
Answer Key for Correct Response: d (spelling error)

Question 3.E.2: What is the correct way to fix the error in lines 3-4?

a. Dribbling furiously around the guard, she attempted a shot from the three-point line.
b. Dribbling furiously around the I. She attempted a shot from the three-point line.
c. Dribbling furiously around the guard. She is attempting a shot from the three-point line.
d. Dribbling furiously around the guard. She attempts a shot from the three-point line.

Answer key for Correct Response: a (sentence fragment; use of punctuation)

Question 3.E.3: what is the correct way to fix the error in line 5?

a. "Rita!" I shouted "I hero!"
b. "Rita!" I shouted. "I heroe!"
c. "Rita! I shouted. I hero!"
d. "Rita!" I shouted. "You're a hero!"

Answer key for Correct Response: d (grammatical error)

Grade Level: 8th grade

Item Type: Multiple Choice

Alignment to GLE #W9 In independent writing, students demonstrate command of appropriate English conventions by …
W9.1.7 Applying rules of Standard English usage to correct grammatical errors.
W9 .3.7 Applying appropriate punctuation to various sentence patterns
W9.4.7 Applying conventional spelling to new situations

Supporting information about the design related to writing: Students identify an error in a given sentence and select the best way to correct it. Distracters include "fair game" identified in GLE #W9 for this grade (spelling, punctuation, grammar). Students are not asked to explain why the sentence is incorrect.

Depth of Knowledge: Level 1: Identifying Standard English usage and recognizing errors.

Rationale: The student needs to read a short passage and look for several common types of errors in a variety of modes (spelling, usage, punctuation, sentence fragments). For the student, this type of item closely simulates proofreading her own work. In each case, the distractors are also common conventions errors.

Example 3.F - Constructed Response Item: Grade 5

Read the beginning of this report. Then continue writing the report, responding to the prompt below.

       I go to Washington Elementary School. I look forward to every day there. <u>It is a good school because it has a very special playground.</u>
       This playground has the latest equipment. It has a very big slide that has a loop-de-loop. It also has a merry-go-round. It goes fast and plays music. There is even a paved area that is perfect for hopscotch and jumping rope.

Write the paragraph that would come next in this report. Make sure that all of your details support the <u>underlined focus</u> and that you have included enough details for a well-written paragraph.

Grade Level: 5th grade

Item Type: Constructed Response

Alignment to GLE #W8 - In informational writing, students demonstrate a range of elaboration strategies by…
W8.1.4 Including facts and details relevant to focus/controlling idea
W8.2.4 <u>Including sufficient details or facts</u> for appropriate depth of information: naming, describing, explaining, comparing, use of visual images
Alignment to GLE #W1 – Students demonstrate command of the structures of sentences, paragraphs, and text by…
W1.2.4 Using the paragraph form: indenting, main idea, supporting details

Supporting information about the design related to writing: Students identify sufficient facts and details to support the given focus. Students apply knowledge of sentences and paragraphs (main idea, supporting details) to write a "next" paragraph in this report.

Depth of Knowledge: Level 2: Use of simple organizational structures; writing texts limited to one paragraph; writing main idea with pertinent supporting details

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Example 3.F - Task-Specific Rubric For Constructed Response Item: Grade 5

Score 0	Student makes no attempts to respond to prompt
Score 1	Student presents very little or random information Or Focus of the paragraph may be unclear or shifts from given focus Or Piece is too brief to discern whether the student has addressed the prompt
Score 2	Focus of the paragraph is clear and consistent with given focus And Student may have included many details, but some details are extraneous (see anchors) Or Student may have included only one or two details to support the focus of a special playground Or Student may supply adequate quantity of detail, but is very repetitious (see anchors)
Score 3	The paragraph is well-constructed with main idea and supporting details And Student has included details which overall support the focus of a special playground, and are written to an appropriate depth
Score 4	The paragraph is well-constructed with main idea and supporting details And Student has included many relevant details to support focus of special playground Or Some or many of the details are particularly precise and/or insightful

Note: Anchor responses will be selected from field-testing to further illustrate and revise these rubric descriptors.

Example 3.G - Constructed Response Item: Grade 8

You have been assigned a report and began by writing the introduction (see below). Look carefully at the introduction to determine how you will continue writing this report.

Everything changes over time and with the seasons. Weather changes, temperature varies, and even clothing and sports change with the seasons. I really notice the seasonal changes, however, in my own yard in the winter.

Write the next paragraph of this report, using appropriate paragraph form. Be sure to include enough details to support the focus.

Grade Level: 8th grade

Item Type: Constructed Response

Alignment to GLE #W6 - In informational writing, students organize information by…
W6.1.7 Using an organizational text structure appropriate to focus/controlling idea
Alignment to GLE #W8 - In informational writing, students demonstrate a range of elaboration strategies by…
W8.1.7 Including facts and details relevant to focus/controlling idea and excluding extraneous information
W8.2.7 Including sufficient details or facts for appropriate depth
W8.4.7 Commenting on the significance of the information, when appropriate
Alignment to GLE #W1 – Students demonstrate command of the structures of sentences, paragraphs, and text by…
W1.2.7 Using the paragraph form: indenting, main idea, supporting details

Supporting information about the design related to writing: Students identify the focus of the report, in order to provide sufficient facts and details to support the introduction and focus. Students include relevant supporting information and may comment on the significance of information included. Students apply knowledge of text structures to write a "next" paragraph in this report.

Depth of Knowledge: Level 2: Use of simple organizational structures; writing texts limited to one paragraph; writing main idea with pertinent supporting details

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Example 3.G - Task-Specific Rubric For Constructed Response Item: Grade 8

Score 0	Student makes no attempts to respond to prompt
Score 1	Student presents very little or random information Or Focus of the paragraph may be unclear or shifts from given focus Or Piece is too brief to discern whether the student has addressed the prompt
Score 2	Focus of the paragraph is clear and consistent with given focus (seasonal changes in my yard) And Student may have included many details, but some details are extraneous Or Student may have included only one or two details to support the focus of seasonal changes in my yard Or Student may supply adequate quantity of detail, but is very repetitious
Score 3	The paragraph is well-constructed with main idea and supporting details and uses appropriate text structure And Student has included details which overall support the focus of changes in my yard, and are written to an appropriate depth
Score 4	The paragraph is well-constructed with main idea and supporting details and uses appropriate text structure And Student has included details which overall support the focus of changes in my yard, and are written to an appropriate depth And Some or many of the details are particularly precise or insightful (see anchors) Or The student explains the significance of some supporting details (see anchors)

Note: Anchor responses will be selected from field-testing to further illustrate these rubric descriptors

Example 3.H – Prompts for Extended Writing Response

Sample prompts for extended writing responses for grades 5 and 8 appear on the follow pages, with alignment to TSNE GLEs and DOK levels explained. Genres presently recommended for extended writing items include: Response to Literary or Informational Text (grades 5 and 8), Reports (grades 5 and 8), Narrative (grade 5 only), and Persuasive Writing (grade 8 only). Field test data will be reviewed to determine genres/GLEs to be assessed with extended writing items. It is expected that the contractor will work with the TSNE writing content committee to review and refine writing prompts in all genres of writing to be field-tested and to assist with selection of Anchor papers illustrating all score points.

Draft Genre-Specific Holistic Scoring Guides for grades 5 and 8 are included in Appendix C.

NOTE: Response to Literary or Informational Text

Extended Writing Prompts related to assessing Response to Literary or Informational Text will be specific to the texts chosen, and therefore none are suggested at this time.

Sample Prompts for Extended Writing Response Items - Grade 5

Grade Level: 5th grade

Item Type: Extended Writing Response

Alignment to GLE #W6 - In informational writing, students organize information by…
W6.1.4 Grouping ideas logically
W6.2.4 Writing an introduction that sets the context
W6.3.4 Using transition words or phrases
W6.4.4 Writing a conclusion
Alignment to GLE #W7 - In informational writing, students effectively convey purpose by…
W7.1.4 Stating and maintaining a focus/controlling idea on a topic
Alignment to GLE #W8 - In informational writing, students demonstrate a range of elaboration strategies by…
W8.1.4 Including facts and details relevant to focus/controlling idea
W8.2.4 Including sufficient details or facts for appropriate depth of information
Alignment to GLE #W1 – Students demonstrate command of the structures of sentences, paragraphs, and text by…
W1.1.4 Using a variety of complete simple and compound sentences
W1.2.4 Using the paragraph form: indenting, main idea, supporting details

Supporting information about the design related to writing: Students identify the focus for the writing and provide sufficient facts and details to support and maintain the focus. Students include relevant supporting information. Students apply knowledge of appropriate text structures.

Depth of Knowledge: Level 3: Developing multi- paragraph compositions; Using varied sentence structures in written compositions; Demonstrating some synthesis and analysis in writing (making inferences; determining relationships; generalizing, or connecting ideas); Using appropriate organizational text structure

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Informational Writing: Reports

Sample 3H.1 (grade 5)

Think about inventions that have affected the way we live. Select one invention and explain how it has affected the way we live.

Source: Adapted from PA Writing Assessment Handbook, grade 6

Sample 3H.2 (grade 5)

Identify an activity such as a hobby, pastime, or sport that you enjoy or that you do well. Explain what you do and why you chose this activity.

Source: Adapted from PA Writing Assessment Handbook, grade 6

Sample 3H.3 (grade 5)

Read the two short articles on Rosa Parks and George Washington. Write a report that compares what they have done and how they have helped our country.

(Item would provide two very short articles or parts of articles with enough information to draw upon for supporting details.)

Narrative

Grade Level: 5th grade

Item Type: Extended Writing Response

Alignment to GLE #W4 - In narratives, students organize and relate a storyline/plot/series of events by…
W4.1.4 Creating a clear, understandable story line with a beginning, middle, and end
W4.2.4 Establishing a problem and solution
Alignment to GLE #W5 - Students demonstrate use of narrative strategies by…
W5.1.4 Using relevant and descriptive details
W5.2.4 Identifying characters
Alignment to GLE #W1 – Students demonstrate command of the structures of sentences, paragraphs, and text by…
W1.1.4 Using a variety of complete simple and compound sentences
W1.2.4 Using the paragraph form: indenting, main idea, supporting details

Supporting information about the design related to writing: Students identify the problem and solution for the writing and provide description and details to support the storyline. Students apply knowledge of appropriate text structures.

Depth of Knowledge: Level 3: Developing multi- paragraph compositions; Using varied sentence structures in written compositions; Demonstrating some synthesis and analysis in writing (making inferences; determining relationships; generalizing, or connecting ideas); Using appropriate organizational text structure

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Sample 3H.4 Narrative (grade 5)

At different times in their lives, people face situations in which they need to be brave.
Write a story about a time when someone needed to be brave.

Source: Adapted from PA Writing Assessment Handbook, grade 6

Sample 3H.5 Narrative (grade 5)

Look at the above picture. Pretend you looked out your window one day and this is what you saw. Tell a story that goes with the picture.

Source: Adapted NAEP released item, grade 4

NOTE: scan 2nd picture of stars from NAEP item

Sample 3H.6 Narrative (grade 5)

You have just found a key. What does the key look like? Write an adventure story about what happens when you use this key.

Source: Adapted RI released item, grade 3

Sample Prompts for Extended Writing Response - Grade 8

Grade Level: 8th grade

Item Type: Extended Writing Response

Alignment to GLE #W6 - In informational writing, students organize information by…
W6.1.7 Using an organizational text structure appropriate to focus/controlling idea
W6.2.7 Selecting appropriate information to set context, which may include a lead/hook
W6.3.7 Using transition words or phrases appropriate to organizational text structure
W6.4.7 Writing a conclusion that provides closure
Alignment to GLE #W7 - In informational writing, students effectively convey purpose by…
W7.1.7 Stating and maintaining a focus/controlling idea
W7.2.7 Writing with a sense of audience, if appropriate
Alignment to GLE #W8 - In informational writing, students demonstrate a range of elaboration strategies by…
W8.1.7 Including facts and details relevant to focus/controlling idea and excluding extraneous information
W8.2.7 Including sufficient details or facts for appropriate depth
W8.4.7 Commenting on the significance of the information, when appropriate
Alignment to GLE #W1 – Students demonstrate command of the structures of sentences, paragraphs, and text by…
W1.1.7 Using varied sentence length and structure to enhance meaning
W1.2.7 Using the paragraph form: indenting, main idea, supporting details
W1.4.7 Using a format appropriate to the purpose of the writing

Supporting information about the design related to writing: Students identify the focus for the writing and provide sufficient facts and details to support and maintain the focus. Students include relevant supporting information and may comment on the significance of information included. Students apply knowledge of appropriate text structures.

Depth of Knowledge: Level 3: Developing multi- paragraph compositions; Using complex or varied sentence structures in written compositions; Demonstrating some synthesis and analysis in writing (making inferences; determining relationships; generalizing, or connecting ideas); Showing awareness of audience and purpose through focus, organization, voice/tone; Using appropriate organizational text structures (e.g., description; chronology; proposition/support; compare/contrast)

Informational Writing: Persuasive

Sample 3H.7 Persuasive (grade 8)

The school board of your school has just voted that everyone in the school must play a sport. Take a position on this decision and then write a letter to the school board to convince them that this is a good/bad idea.

Source: Adapted from PA Writing Assessment Handbook, grade 6

Sample 3H.8 Persuasive (grade 8)

Your community has been awarded money to build a monument in honor of a person. Decide what a person would have to do to receive this award. Write a letter to your community leaders persuading them to build the monument to the type of person you selected.

Source: Adapted from PA Writing Assessment Handbook, grade 6

Informational Writing: Persuasive (continued)

Sample 3H.9 Persuasive (grade 8)

In this time of huge unemployment, more companies are no longer hiring students for an after school job. Write a letter to a company you know to convince them to hire you for an after school job.

Source: Adapted from PA Writing Assessment Handbook, grade 6

Informational Writing: Reports

Sample 3H.10 Report (grade 8)

Identify an activity such as a hobby, pastime, or sport that you enjoy. Explain what you do, why you chose this activity, and the benefits of this activity for you and others.

Source: Adapted from PA Writing Assessment Handbook, grade 6

Sample 3H.11 Report (grade 8)

Think about inventions that have affected the way we live. Select one invention and explain how it has affected the way we live.

Source: Adapted from PA Writing Assessment Handbook, grade 6

IV. Administration Guidelines for Writing Assessment

A. Testing time – The writing assessment will be designed as a "power test" rather than as a timed test. Students will be permitted to continue working as long as they are productively engaged, as determined by the test monitor. There will be two testing sessions of approximately 45-minutes each. It is assumed that the testing sessions occur on different days. A short break may be allowed between parts of each testing session (e.g., after the second constructed response item in session one), but is not considered part of the overall testing time for the testing session. Constructed response items and the extended writing prompt will require the majority of the testing time.

Notwithstanding the above provisions, the writing assessment will include time for instructions and test logistics.

B. Accommodations – The states of New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont will provide a set of protocols for Accommodations for statewide testing.

C. Oral reading of passages – Any passages or parts of passages which are provided as part of items, such as the prompt for an extended writing in response to literary or informational text (TSNE GLEs #W2, W3) may be read orally by test administrators or provided on audio tape. However, no interpretations or explanations of text are allowed.

D. Use of prewriting strategies – Students may use prewriting strategies, such as note taking or webbing, prior to composing an extended writing piece; however, the prewriting will NOT be assessed with the extended writing.

E. Use of classroom materials – The TSNE partner states are currently working to establish a policy for use of classroom materials – such as dictionaries, individual writing folders, etc. – during administration of the TSNE reading assessment. These protocols will be included in the final test specifications.

F. Other – Except as explicitly stated or prohibited in these test specifications, or elsewhere in state policies, regulations, or laws, schools may follow local policies, procedures, and protocols.

V. Overview of the Writing Assessment Design

The TSNE Writing Assessment is designed to be given over two testing sessions as described below. *Bidders are asked to address the writing test design, proposing a strategy and rationale for identifying genres for the extended writing prompt, including actual field test data related to testing times and genres at grades 5 and 8.*

Session 1 (approximately 45+ minutes)
Includes approximately ten (10) multiple choice and three (3) constructed response items. Constructed response items will "sample" writing GLEs from genres not included in the extended writing prompt.

Multiple Choice Items
Multiple-choice items will assess writing conventions and structures of text (sentences, paragraphs, and text structures). These items will include such things as editing tasks (punctuation, capitalization); identification of sentence fragments; and selecting appropriate transitional devices and different text structures (cause/effect, descriptive, problem/solution, etc.).

Constructed response items will include such things as: selecting and organizing given facts for a report to be written; writing an introduction or concluding paragraph for a given "unfinished" piece of writing; selecting more effective transitional words and rewriting a section of a passage for an intended effect on reader; writing using different text structures (cause/effect, descriptive, problem/solution, etc.).

Session 2 (approximately 45+ minutes)
Includes approximately five (5) multiple choice and one extended writing prompt item.

Multiple Choice Items
These shorter items at the beginning of session 2 might link to the extended writing prompt – providing scaffolding or planning, such as building an outline or selecting supportive factual information for report writing in the extended writing item. These items should sample the same writing genre as the extended writing prompt.

Extended Writing Prompt
Only one genre can be selected for the extended writing prompt each year, since it will be a common item for all students. **Report Writing** and **Writing in Response to Text** were identified by the TSNE GLE development committee as the two important areas of writing to assess with an extended writing prompt at both grades 5 and 8. Additionally, **Narrative** was identified at grade 5 and **Persuasive** writing at grade 8 for use as potential extended writing prompts, given their curricular emphasis at those grade levels. *Bidders are asked to propose a strategy for test design to assure reliability and comparability of test forms if extended prompts from different genres are used across years.*

Considerations: These genres might be used in alternating years for the extended writing prompt, and sampled using constructed response items on the "off" years. Writing in Response to Text is a genre that asks students to write, as well as, analyze writing of

others. It provides students with an opportunity to use both informational and literary texts as the basis for the response to text. The TSNE Partner states recognizes that there are time constraints for reading or hearing text read aloud that only exists with this genre; therefore, passage length and complexity must be carefully considered. Rationales should be included for identifying genres fro extended writing prompts for the TSNE Writing Assessment.

Table 5.1 Overview of Writing Item Types, Estimated Times, and Genres Sampled

Two Testing Sessions of 45+ Minutes Each for Writing						
Session 1 (mix of short items) and Session 2 (short items with extended writing prompt)						
Item Types	Estimated Time/Item	**Common or Matrix**	**Number of Items per Student**	**Number of Points**	Testing Time (90 min. total)	Genres/GLEs Assessed:
MC (1 point)	1 minute	**Common**	15	15	15	Conventions Structures + other genres?
Constructed response (4 points)	8-10 minutes	**Common**	3	12	30	Narrative, Persuasive (gr 8 only) and Reports or Response to Text
Extended Writing Prompt (5 points – double scored)	25-30 min	**Common,** (Text used for Response to Text can include informational and literary texts)	1	10	30	Response to Text or Report or Narrative (gr 5) or Persuasive (gr 8) (Bidders are asked for methods to alternate these genres each year)
Totals			19	37	Approx 75+ minutes	

VI. Summary of Rationales for Test Components and Bidder Flexibility

Below is a summary of the components of the test specifications for the TSNE writing assessment and bidder requirements and flexibility related to each component.

Table 6.1: Test Components, Rationales, and Bidder Requirements and Flexibility

Components of Writing Test Specifications	Rationale	Bidder Flexibility
Content Clusters and Reporting Categories (See Sections I and II and TSNE Draft GLEs in Writing)	With a single score in writing, additional information derived from extended writing items will provide valuable instructional/curricular feedback.	• Bidders should provide methods of reporting "additional information" related to conventions and dimensions and any diagnostic information that can be derived from the assessment.
Distribution of Emphasis across content clusters and GLEs within content strands, based on Balance of Representation (See Section II)	The Distribution of Emphasis was established to provide a distribution of items across a form that would result in stable forms year-to-year AND reflect recommended assessment emphasis in relationship to the TSNE writing GLEs.	• Some aspects of each TSNE Writing GLE should be assessed every year. • The TSNE Partner states would not expect that the number of items/score points across GLEs be rigidly adhered to from year to year, but does expect that the relative emphasis be attended to in sampling. Because the TSNE Partners are interested in some writing genres being assessed deeper or more thoroughly than others, they would ***not*** accept a GLE designated as low emphasis receiving high emphasis, and vice versa. • Contractors should provide strategies that consider the maintenance of Distribution of Emphasis for both item types and points across genres with "greater emphasis" across years and forms.
Depth of Knowledge Levels and "ceilings" (See Section II)	Including items that assess the cognitive range of a GLE is designed to potentially assure that: a. The assessment as a whole will not be too difficult; 2) Important information about student learning along the achievement continuum will not be lost.	• The general alignment protocol for this aspect is that a GLE should ***not*** be assessed above its "ceiling," and to the extent possible at the "ceiling" and at least one level below the "ceiling." • Bidders should include strategies to address the distributions across the levels and/or indicate any concerns or limitations that may arise from this specification. • Bidders should be prepared to work with the TSNE content teams to solidify the TSNE Depth of Knowledge descriptors for writing, GLE "ceilings," and appropriate item examples for each DOK level.
Intent of use of Conjunctions "and", "or" (See Section I and TSNE Draft GLEs in Writing)	The "ands" and "ors" were established to guide test developer's sampling as it reflects the prioritization that occurred throughout the TSNE GLE development process.	• Every GLE – meaning every GLE "bullet" (aspects of the GLE) – should be assessed by at least 1 item every year. • GLE aspects ("bullets") may be combined within the same item (e.g., an item might ask for stating a focus and use of details to support the focus, in the same CR item) • To the extent possible, elements of GLEs connected with "and" should be assessed every year. • Elements of the GLE connected with "or" can be rotated across years.

Draft Test Specifications Tri-State New England (TSNE) Writing Assessment

Components of Writing Test Specifications	Rationale	Bidder Flexibility
Item Types*:* ➢ **Multiple Choice (1 point)** ➢ **Constructed Response (4 points)** ➢ **Extended Writing (10 points)** (See Sections III and V)	To provide item formats that include opportunities to apply writing skills in both short and longer pieces of writing, demonstrate writing content knowledge, and apply reasoning and analysis skills.	• The assessment at each grade level (grade 5 and grade 8) must include a distribution of all three item types. • All items are common items at each grade level. • Text passages for writing in response to text(s) should come from "authentic text" – and may include passages from both literary and informational text. • The testing period cannot exceed two testing sessions. • Potential bidders should provide the TSNE Partners with examples of rubrics to assess each of these item types. Each constructed response item will include an item-specific analytic scoring guide that includes the following: detailed descriptions of required performance at each score point. • Bidders should provide actual field test data, a strategy, and rationale for genres assessed with extended writing prompts.

Appendix A:
Nature of Tri-State New England Grade Level Expectations
(TSNE GLEs)

Purpose of TSNE GLEs: TSNE GLEs are specified for the development of a common, large-scale, state level assessment. Partner states have or may include additional GLEs for use within each state for local assessment purposes.

Definition of a Tri-State New England GLE:

A TSNE GLE is a stated objective that is aligned with VT, NH, and RI standards, by grade. A TSNE GLE differentiates performance on concepts, skills, or content knowledge between adjacent grade levels, and as a set, leads to focused, coherent, and developmentally appropriate instruction without narrowing the curriculum.

Criteria for the Development of TSNE GLEs

1) TSNE GLEs **must** relate to the RI, NH, and VT standards.

2) TSNE GLEs should maintain a balance between a describing a generalizable skill, concept, or piece of knowledge, **and** have enough specificity to differentiate skill, concept, or knowledge between adjacent grades, to make it clear to teachers what is to be taught and learned, *without being so specific that it narrows the curriculum.*

3) TSNE GLEs should explicitly indicate cognitive demand (interaction of content and process). There should be a mix of cognitive demands at all grade levels, not an assumption that students in lower grades do less cognitively demanding work. (E.g., Routine skill/procedure, conceptual problem or question, multiple-step problems, problem solving, analysis, reasoning, etc.)

4) TSNE GLEs should be specific and clear enough to know how it will be assessed.

5) TSNE GLEs should contain language that describes expected performance so that a student's performance in relation to the TSNE GLE can be validly assessed for state assessment purposes.
    Not assessable – E.g., "Develops understanding of plot.." or "Begins to use..".
    Assessable – E.g., Demonstrates understanding of plot by identifying and describing characters, setting, problem/solution, and plot.

Note: Test specifications will indicate the upper ceiling of that expectation for state assessment purposes or explicit strategies for assessing the TSNE GLEs. [For example: Demonstrate understanding of plot by: a) identifying and describing characters; b) given an incomplete story sequence, extend the story with a coherent "next step"; or c) given a definition of plot development, provide an example.]

TSNE Criteria for the Development of a _SET_ of TSNE GLEs

1. The set of TSNE GLEs should be of comparable grain size.

2. Concepts, skills, and knowledge should be differentiated between adjacent grade levels.

3. The set of TSNE GLEs within a discipline and content standard reflects the relative importance as defined by the Balance of Representation.

4. The set of TSNE GLEs should promote coherent, focused, developmentally appropriate instruction, as opposed to isolated instruction _just_ on topics, facts, or individual skills that need to be covered.

5. The set of TSNE GLEs at a given grade level (assuming prior learning) should be reasonable to adequately learn   within a school year, and still allow for learning additional state and local expectations.

6. The set of TSNE GLEs should be constructed as a continuum of learning. Success in one grade should be a good predictor of success in the following year.

7. Success on TSNE GLEs across multiple years should be a good predictor of performance at the national benchmark years (e.g., NAEP).

Appendix B: References

The following sources were used in the development of the TSNE GLEs and these Test Specifications.

Draft Test Specifications, Vermont Department of Education, 2003.

NAEP, *Reading Framework for the 1999-2000 National Assessment of Educational Progress*, 2000.

NAEP, *Writing Framework and Specifications for the 1998 National Assessment of Educational Progress*, 1999.

Mid-continental Educational Laboratory (McREL*), K – 12 English Language Arts Standards,* Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning, 2000.

Mid-continental Educational Laboratory (McREL*), Early Literacy Standards: PreK-K,* Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning, 2000.

National Council of Teachers of English/International Reading Association, *Standards for English Language Arts*, 1996.

New Hampshire K-12 ELA Curriculum Framework, New Hampshire Department of Education.

New Standards Project. *Performance Standards: Volume 1: Elementary School.* National Center on Education and the Economy and the University of Pittsburgh, reprinted 1998.

New Standards Project. *Performance Standards: Volume 2: Middle School*. National Center on Education and the Economy and the University of Pittsburgh, 1997.

New Standards Project. *Reading and Writing Grade by Grade: Primary Literacy Standards K-3,* National Center on Education and the Economy and the University of Pittsburgh, 1999.

Reading Developmental Continuum, (researched by the Education Department of Western Australia), published by Heinemann for Education Department of Western Australia, 1994.

"Literacy for ALL Students" *The Rhode Island English Language Arts Framework.* 1996: The Rhode island Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

US Department of Education*, Reading: Knowing What Works, K-3, National Institute for Literacy*, 2000

Vermont's Framework of Standards and Learning Opportunities, 2000, Vermont Department of Education.

Webb, Norman. "Depth of Knowledge Levels for Four Content Areas," March 2002.

Webb, Norman, Research Monograph Number 6, *Criteria for Alignment of Expectations and Assessments on Mathematics and Science Education*. CCSSO, 1997.

Appendix C: Regarding "Text Complexity"
(draft Hess, Biggam, McCarter, 2003)

The criteria listed below describe ways in which text materials generally increase in difficulty over the grades. The interaction of these factors affect the relative difficulty of reading and interpreting the message in the text.

- **Word difficulty and language structure, including vocabulary and sentence complexity, etc. (often determined through the use of multiple readability formulas);**
- **Text structure, text features—discourse style (e.g., satire, humor)**
- **Genre;**
- **Content/ background knowledge needed by the reader;**
- **Level of reasoning required (e.g., sophistication of themes); and**
- **Format, layout, length, and other book/ print features.**

The descriptors in the table on the following page build from one grade cluster to the next. Selection of specific texts for use in assessment items at a given grade level – such as Writing in Response to Literary or Informational Text - should be reviewed for these factors to assure that text will be accessible for all students.

Text Complexity Descriptors for Grade Clusters
(draft Hess, Biggam, McCarter, 2003)

Text Complexity Descriptors Grades 3-4	Text Complexity Descriptors Grades 5-6	Text Complexity Descriptors Grades 7-8
Includes a range of literary selections, such as poetry, biography, and fantasies. Narratives usually include familiar characters or settings.	Includes a range of literary selections, such as full-length novels, well-crafted short stories (with increasingly diverse characters and settings), historical fiction and myths.	Includes a full range of literary genres including realistic and historical fiction, science fiction, fantasy, and folk literature.
Informational/ functional text including short expository pieces, e.g., descriptive, compare/ contrast, directions, simple recipes, etc.	Includes more complex informational/ functional texts, such as persuasive essays, procedural "how to" guides, scientific and historical summaries (e.g., textbooks).	Informational/ functional texts include primary sources, personal narratives and autobiographies, schedules and manuals, as well as synthesized information found in textbooks.
Varied vocabulary but generally familiar; some figurative (e.g., similes). Increased use of challenging vocabulary (e.g., multi-syllabic words, words with multiple meanings). Technical words are defined or explained in context.	More varied and challenging vocabulary, including use of figurative language (idioms, metaphors) and analogies. Some technical terms.	Increasing number of uncommon words, including words with non-literal meanings and more abstract vocabulary. Word choice can reflect diverse historical and cultural context. Text includes technical words with specialized meaning.
Sentence structure becoming more elaborated and complex, including some use of passive voice, abstract or descriptive language.	Language in narrative text includes dialect and other linguistic variants to enhance characterization and setting.	Language and narrative text is more elaborated and complex, and include a wide range of dialogue, varied sentence structure to convey specific meanings, and prose style that matches text purpose (informational, recreational, provocative, etc.)
Relatively straightforward text structures. Texts include more information, more complex ideas and relationships (e.g., examples, comparisons).	Ideas and content increase in number and density. Relationships between ideas become more complex (e.g., flashback may be introduces) in narrative text; graphs and charts are needed to convey key information in expository text.	
Content usually builds from shared/ somewhat familiar experiences.	Content requires general background knowledge. Underlying themes become more complex and more universal.	Relationships between ideas become less explicit and require more inference.
In narrative text, the story elements (plot, setting, characterization) provide support for both literal and interpretive meanings.	Interrelationships among story elements become more complex and require more interpretation. Literary elements include flashback, humor, suspense, personification, and exaggeration.	Understanding content requires increasing cultural and historical knowledge. More sophisticated themes.
Informational texts use clear formats, illustrations, and graphics to support understanding of content. Text features include, timelines, captions, and maps.	Informational and functional texts use a variety of formats, illustrations, and graphics to support understanding. Texts features include chapter headings, glossaries, punctuation guides.	Texts used often call for literary analysis.
		Informational texts use format, illustrations, and graphics to support understanding of meaning. Text features include advance organizers, inset text, technology support.

Appendix C: Genre-Specific Writing Scoring Guides

HOLISTIC SCORING GUIDE: Informational Writing - PERSUASIVE WRITING
Grade 8

1	2	3	4	5
• Topic may be difficult to discern • No position stated • May be either rambling or too brief • Few or no supporting ideas	• Little or no context provided • Position and/or topic may be unclear • Reasons are thinly developed • May lack a clear ending	• Establishes a context • States a clear position • Has some supporting evidence for position • Has a conclusion • Uses organizational text structure • May use transition words	• Establishes necessary context for audience • States and maintains a clear position throughout the piece • Organizes supporting evidence appropriate to text structure • Provides and elaborates on convincing and appropriate facts and details, excluding extraneous information • Attempts to address reader's possible concerns or counter arguments • Writes a conclusion • Uses transition words/phrases	• Establishes necessary context for audience • States and maintains a clear position throughout the piece • Arranges supporting evidence persuasively • Provides and elaborates on convincing and appropriate facts and details • Addresses reader's possible concerns or counter arguments with effective rebuttal • Writes a strong conclusion by synthesizing information

HOLISTIC SCORING GUIDE: Informational Writing - REPORTS
GRADE 8

1	2	3	4	5
• No context • States topic with no clear focus • Random, disconnected and/or unfocused opinions with some scattered facts • Presents very little information • No conclusion • May lack coherence; no transitions	• Limited context • Defines subject with a simple statement, rather than a controlling idea • Relies on general rather than specific details and may use irrelevant details (often presented in a list) • May rely on opinion rather than facts • May have an abrupt ending • Few or weak transition words and phrases	• Sets sufficient context • States and maintains a focus/controlling idea, but may not use it effectively to unify report • Includes some facts and details relevant to focus • Some information may be irrelevant • Has a clear ending; may have a conclusion • Uses some transition words and phrases	• Selects appropriate information to set context • States and maintains a focus/controlling idea • Includes facts and details relevant to focus and excludes extraneous information • Includes sufficient details to support focus • Writes an effective conclusion • Uses an appropriate organizational structure • Uses transition words and phrases	• Selects appropriate information to set context and may provide a lead/hook • States and maintains a clear focus/controlling idea • Includes facts and details relevant to focus and excludes extraneous information • Includes sufficient elaboration of details for appropriate depth • Draws a conclusion by synthesizing information • Uses an appropriate organizational structure • Uses transition words and phrases appropriate to the organizational structure

HOLISTIC SCORING GUIDE: RESPONSE TO TEXT
GRADE 8

1	2	3	4	5
- No context provided - No focus - Little organization; reader may find the ideas hard to follow - Random and/or limited details - Provides no references to text	- Responds with general summary or retelling - Attempts to set context - Sense of purpose may be confined to providing a summary or retelling - Provides only vague references to text - Attempts to organize, has digressions - Details may be limited to lists of details or generalities	- Sets context - Sense of purpose may be uneven (lapses from analysis to summary) - Uses some transitions - Uses some specific concrete details, but references to text may be general - Makes some inferences about relationship(s) among content, events, characters, setting, theme, and/or author's craft - Sufficiently organized, (appropriate to topic and purpose), but may have minor digressions	- Selects key ideas to set context - States and maintains a focus appropriate to prompt - Organizes ideas so that reader can easily follow the writer's thinking - Writes a conclusion that provides closure - Uses appropriate transitions - Uses concrete details and references to text and/or specific citations to support focus - Makes inferences about relationship(s) among content, events, characters, setting, theme, and/or author's craft	**All of Level 4 criteria and at least one of the following…** - Provides insightful inferences OR - Uses rich details

HOLISTIC SCORING GUIDE: Informational Writing - REPORTS
Grade 5
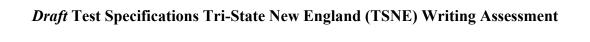
1	2	3	4	5
• No context • Topic and/or focus may be unclear or shift • Lacks organization or piece is too brief to discern • No transitions • Presents very little or random information	• Little context • Attempts a focus, but focus may shift throughout the piece • Few transition words and phrases • Includes few facts and details; or may have random or irrelevant details • May end abruptly	• Limited context • States a focus/controlling idea, but may not use it effectively to unify report • Some attempt to group ideas • Uses some transition words and phrases • Includes some facts and details • May provide a conclusion; conclusion may be weak	• Sets context • States and maintains a focus/controlling idea • Uses transition words and phrases • Includes facts and details • Includes sufficient details for appropriate depth of information (naming, describing, explaining, and/or comparing) *excluding extraneous information* • Provides a conclusion • Uses organizational text structure	• Sets context appropriate to question asked • States and maintains a focus/controlling idea • Uses transition words and phrases • Includes facts and details relevant to focus • Includes sufficient details or facts for appropriate depth of information: (naming, describing, explaining, and/or comparing) • Provides a conclusion • Uses organizational text structure

HOLISTIC SCORING GUIDE: RESPONSE TO TEXT
Grade 5

1	2	3	4	5
• No context provided • No focus • Little organization; reader may find the ideas hard to follow • Random and/or limited details	• Responds with general summary or retelling • Attempts to set context/background • Focus may be evident, but may shift throughout the piece • Attempts to organize, but has digressions • Details may be limited to lists or generalities.	• Provides limited information to set context/background • States a focus • Sense of purpose may be uneven or confined to providing a summary • May lack a conclusion • References to text are present, but may be general • Sufficiently organized, but may have minor digressions	• Makes inferences about content, events, characters, setting, or common themes • States and maintains a focus appropriate to prompt • Uses details and specific references to text to support focus, which may also include connection to prior knowledge • Selects appropriate information to set context • Organizes ideas using transition words/phrases and writes a conclusion	**All of Level 4 criteria and at least one of the following…** • Provides insightful inferences OR • Uses rich details

HOLISTIC SCORING GUIDE: NARRATIVE
Grade 5

1	2	3	4	5
• Little or no story line evident	• Story line may not be consistent or understandable throughout • May refer to characters, but does not identify them clearly • Some details may not be effective or appropriate • Beginning, middle, and/or end unclear	• Story line not clearly maintained throughout • Has beginning, middle, and end, but beginning or end may need to be more clear to reader • Identifies some characters • Uses some details	• Creates a clear story line • Has a beginning, middle, and end • Identifies characters • Uses relevant and descriptive details • Establishes a problem and/or solution	**All of Level 4 criteria and at least one of the following…** • Coherent storyline OR • Development of main character OR • Use of rich elaboration to support story line OR • Reflects on significance of events